

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE, 28 NOVEMBER 2017

Title:

UPDATE REPORT FROM THE INTERIM MANAGING DIRECTOR

**[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Julia Potts]
[Wards Affected: All]**

Summary and purpose:

Tom Horwood commenced work as interim Managing Director and statutory Head of Paid Service of Waverley Borough Council on 1 August 2017. This report provides an update on his assignment.

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

The role of Head of Paid Service is critical to the delivery of the Council's corporate and strategic priorities.

Equality and Diversity Implications:

No particular equality and diversity implications have been identified in this report.

Financial Implications:

The costs of this assignment have remained within the original budget.

Legal Implications:

The Head of Paid Service role is one of the statutory officers of the Council. No other particular legal implications have been identified within this report.

Background

1. The Council meeting of 18 July 2017 appointed me as Head of Paid Service and interim Managing Director. I commenced work on 1 August and have worked at WBC for approximately 3 days a week, with the other days dedicated to my pre-existing role as Executive Director at East Hampshire District Council and Havant Borough Council. As East Hampshire DC is technically my employer, I am seconded to Waverley BC under section 113 of the Local Government Act 1972 and under a direct contract, which states that I will be at Waverley for 71 days over a six-month period, August 2017 to January 2018 inclusive. At the time of writing, I have been honoured to provide 44 busy days of service for Waverley. I have also been available to Waverley on other days by telephone, while focusing on my work with the other two councils.

2. The specific brief for my assignment, set out in the Council report, was:
 - a. to ensure that the day-to-day work and statutory functions of the Head of Paid Service role are properly covered, and
 - b. to work with the Executive to review Waverley BC's strategic direction and approach.

Head of Paid Service functions

3. As agreed in July, I have operated as the Head of Paid Service for the Council and have provided direct line management to the two Directors, the Head of Policy and Governance, the Strategic HR Manager and the Personal Assistant. I have been very impressed by the warm welcome that I have received from colleagues since arriving in August. Their excellent support over the last four months has been critical to the running of the Council. To facilitate this assignment, the Directors and Head of Policy & Governance were required to take on specific functions, and I would like to acknowledge and thank them for exercising those functions so well.
4. I have been involved closely with a variety of important matters – some planned and some unexpected – since arriving. These take time and energy, but are within what ought to be expected of the Council's senior strategic roles. I have also participated in the out-of-hours emergency response rota that all senior managers are involved with.
5. Since August, I have worked with colleagues and Executive Members to streamline and simplify some of the internal decision-making processes, reducing meetings and clarifying responsibilities. I have focused on improving internal communication and engagement to encourage some of the cultural and behavioural evolution that is increasingly necessary in today's financially-straitened and customer-focused public service environment.
6. The service and budget planning cycle is on track. Service performance is reported regularly to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees and is very good overall.
7. I am grateful for the warm welcome of councillors. I have met most and have invited all to arrange a direct meeting with me, which some have done. A key aspect of the Head of Paid Service role is to support all councillors, of whatever political standing, and I have been pleased to spend time listening to and discussing the concerns that have been raised with me.
8. I have also met directly with members of our key public service partners (i.e. Town and Parish Councils, Surrey's County and Borough Councils, Surrey Police) and the Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership, as well as with some local groups, individual residents and businesses. I was delighted to attend the Council's annual Civic Service in Chiddingfold. A key asset of the borough is our very active and articulate community and I have enjoyed getting to appreciate the diversity of this.

Strategic direction and approach

9. An important focus of my work has been with the Executive in developing a new Corporate Strategy. The Directors and I joined members of the Executive in a workshop facilitated by a colleague of the Local Government Association to outline

the themes and vision for the borough and the Council in the coming years. An initial draft was discussed at further workshops on 21 November, to which all councillors were invited. The outcomes will be brought together within a draft Strategy for further discussion with the Council, and the intention is to approve a new Strategy with the budget in February 2018.

10. The priority themes emerging in these discussions with councillors are already influencing service planning and will be embedded further in the performance agreements of staff members. It is becoming clear that the Council wishes to strengthen its focus on:

- 'place-shaping': ensuring that the borough is an attractive and sustainable location in which to live, work and visit
- prosperity: maximising opportunity for all residents in these challenging economic times
- providing quality responsive and affordable services to residents and businesses
- shaping the business to be fit for the future, in partnership with the community and with other public service providers

11. A key aspect of my assignment has been to work with my three sponsor-councils to explore opportunities for further joint working. Senior councillors of Waverley, East Hampshire and Havant have met together and with me and the joint Chief Executive of East Hampshire and Havant Councils, which have had a shared management team and some services for seven years. It is clear that, while Waverley Council wishes to retain a dedicated senior management resource, there is more scope for multi-lateral joint working. To this end, collaboration across the three councils on the new General Data Protection Regulations has been agreed and will save resource and avoid duplication, and a Planning Manager is being seconded from Havant to help bridge a Waverley vacancy. Specific discussions on certain service and contract areas have begun to explore this potential further for the mutual benefit of the three councils.

12. At the same time, Waverley's councillor and officer leadership is open to discussing options with other Surrey and neighbouring councils – for example, building on successful joint projects with Surrey County Council, Guildford Borough Council and Rushmoor Borough Council – to achieve good value for money. Relevant meetings are being held to explore possibilities.

13. Waverley is developing an ambitious and outward-looking agenda for the coming years. To complement the new Corporate Strategy, we are preparing a new Human Resources Strategy, which will focus on attitude and behaviour, as well as on skill and professional expertise. This will be critical to developing, training, empowering, retaining and recruiting the calibre that we will need increasingly.

14. Having consulted with the Leader and Executive Members, I am proposing that the strategic officer team be reshaped to reflect the emerging Strategy and these ambitions:

- a. that the future full-time Head of Paid Service role have a stronger external and ambassadorial role in support of the councillor leadership and be titled, 'Chief Executive', as the commonly-understood senior officer title in business

and public services elsewhere, to avoid confusion of role, particularly externally

- b. that the two Director roles take on matrix, rather than directorate-silo, roles, share a generic job description and be titled 'Strategic Director', to emphasise both the strategic responsibilities of the top team and the operational leadership and accountability of Heads of Service
- c. that line management reporting to these three roles be allocated by the Chief Executive to reflect capacity, skills, the Council's priority projects, and the more flexible way of working that is increasingly required in today's public service business environment

15. Solace in Business has been selected through a procurement process to provide independent advice to the Executive on the mechanisms for recruiting to the top team, noting that my assignment is due to end on 31 January. Given my potential interest in the outcome of this process, I have removed myself from the negotiation and the detail, which is the subject of a separate report on this agenda by the (outgoing) Strategic Director and the Strategic HR Manager.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Executive notes the update of the Interim Managing Director.

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